

modernity" (182) that reflects the striving of the secular self to assert a rational, independent, authentic subjectivity. But this secularizing tendency leads Bunyan, as it leads Pilgrim, back toward enchantment, to theologies of incarnation that sustain allegory and propel the subject's quest. *The Pilgrim's Progress* thus suggests that willful enchantment and incarnational poetics can guide, even energize, the projects of secular modernity.

For all its talk of history, the book does little historicizing. Its focus on poetics (as the title indicates) perhaps explains this minimal treatment, but grounding abstract concepts like time and enchantment in historical and material contexts would be helpful to readers. While the connections Crawford forges—between Plato and Augustine, Boethius and Skelton, Spenser and Bunyan, for instance—reflect skillful bridging, they at times border on anachronistic leaping, though always thought provoking. The best historicizing occurs in the Spenser chapter where Crawford explains why it is that allegory in England takes the shape it does in the 1590s. The Bunyan chapter is particularly enjoyable as it challenges the often simplistic and sometimes cursory treatment of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Crawford's insightful readings of a wide range of literary and philosophical texts will be attractive to a large spectrum of readers, and each chapter offers fresh and compelling interpretations of its central sources. As such, the book promises to be one with which future scholarship on allegory must reckon and contend.

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Edward II and a Literature of Same-Sex Love: The Gay King in Fiction, 1590–1640. Michael G. Cornelius.

Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016. x + 292 pp. \$100.

In the last pages of *Edward II and a Literature of Same-Sex Love*, Michael G. Cornelius poses some of the larger theoretical and historical questions that his study largely avoids addressing: "Was 'homosexual' simply the nineteenth-century version of 'Ganymede'? Does 'gay' mean the same thing? How does negative terminology like 'sodomite' come into play? . . . How do we make sense of it all?" (265). Cornelius finds comfort in the thought that "we have long had language to describe male-male erotic activity and romantic attachment" (265); one major aim of his study is to examine what such language in medieval and early modern texts about King Edward II reveals about cultural attitudes toward male-male intimacy. Conflicting answers to Cornelius's questions can also be found in the scholarship that over the last thirty-five years has explored the complex discourses, ideologies, and practices of premodern homoeroticism. Cornelius, however, eschews direct engagement with this scholarship, instead foregrounding his personal identification with Edward II as an icon of gay love. In fact, Cornelius confesses that the sociopolitical dimensions of Edward's reign that have concerned modern scholars do not matter to him: "His reign was turbulent, disorderly, violent, tumultuous. It

changed English political and dynastic history forever. But I just do not care about any of that. I only care about Edward for one reason—his sexuality” (262).

If such a claim is arresting, it doesn't quite account for the actual scope of Cornelius's project, which carefully analyzes depictions of Edward II in texts by Adam Davy (early fourteenth century), Christopher Marlowe, Michael Drayton, Francis Hubert, Elizabeth Cary, Richard Niccols, and others. Such analyses necessarily involve discussion of the political circumstances and events of Edward's reign that affected his sexual relationships. Moreover, Cornelius acknowledges that “sexuality” itself is both “physiological and sociocultural,” and thus not separable from the social and cultural norms, discourses, and ways of feeling that vary over time and place (3). In practice, then, Cornelius can hardly separate out the tumultuous events of Edward's reign from the primary story he wishes to tell about Edward as a “gay” king whose “same-sex love affair” with Piers Gaveston fascinated several premodern writers, who addressed the causes, consequences, and “sociocultural dynamics” of physical love between men (10). In detailed readings of both familiar and relatively neglected texts, Cornelius elucidates the tropes that premodern writers employed to represent same-sex love.

Praising the work of early modern sexuality scholars as “invaluable” (25), Cornelius cites Alan Bray on antisodomy satires, Bruce Smith on friendship in Shakespeare's plays, Jonathan Goldberg on Marlowe's resistance to sexual norms, and Gregory Bredbeck on how early modern accounts of Edward II “shift the focus from political errors (the body politic) to fleshly homoeroticism (the temporal body)” (32). But a few dutiful citations cannot take the place of a sustained engagement with the extremely dense issues of sexual definition and subjectivity raised by these scholars—and also by many other scholars to whose work Cornelius gives scant attention. Moreover, Cornelius sometimes misrepresents the import of the scholarship he cites. For instance, the decontextualized quotation from Bredbeck cited above leads Cornelius to this conclusion: “Thus interest in the story of Edward II is not political, but sexual. That is the Edward II I am most interested in as well: the sexual Edward” (32). This take on Bredbeck is patently misleading, however, as an entire chapter of Bredbeck's study examines the relationship between the political and the sexual in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* and Marlowe's *Edward II*. Even more to the point, Cornelius's own reading of medieval and early modern texts reveals that these authors were intensely interested in “political” issues (e.g., flattery, the limits of monarchical power) that were deeply entangled with the “sexual” and “erotic” dynamics of favor, influence, patronage, and intimacy in the premodern court. Because Cornelius foregrounds a transhistorical “gay” identity and insists on diminishing the entanglement of sexuality with other bodily and cultural practices, *Edward II and a Literature of Same-Sex Love* misses the opportunity to develop a more sophisticated understanding of what was at stake for early modern writers when they returned to the tragic story of a medieval king's love for a handsome favorite.

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